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First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials —Advertisements

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The Ottawa "Mystery"

There is no mistaking the fact that the Ottawa report of a change in plan as to the utilization of the American army excited both surprise and apprehension in this country. The denial by Washington and subsequently by London, the statement of Secretary Baker and Lord Reading, finally the announcement *via* Ottawa of "an error in compilation," seem to dispose of the question of a change in plans, while leaving the plain citizen even more than usually mystified as to the working of the official mind.

The idea of training a vast American army behind the present firing line for use next year has its romantic appeal, but it also has a patent danger. A million American troops, mainly without battle training, suddenly thrown into an offensive, might conceivably deal the final blow of the war. But it would be much more likely to go to the supreme disaster of this greatest of all conflicts.

To train our troops by brigading them with French and British troops; to train our officers by association with experienced Allied officers under conditions of battle, are obvious necessities, if we are to have a modern and effective army. Courage without training has been the curse of the British army, even of the French army in a lesser degree, and will prove the curse of our army if we do not guard against it.

This war is a business before anything else. German success in the war has been due to the fact that the German has made a business of the thing from the beginning. His latest offensive represents the correlation and collection of all the lessons of previous offensives and their application in a manner which must continue to command the admiration even of his enemy. On the technical side there has been nothing in this war surpassing the recent German offensive of March 21.

The story of the making of the British army was the story of transforming a civilian population alike into officers and private soldiers. It has been a glorious achievement, but an achievement which has been expensive in the very best of British manhood and the very finest elements in the British population. In the bloody days of 1915 it was necessary to put green troops into the line and into battle. The result was staggering casualty lists. And the same thing was true in 1916 at the Somme.

Let us in America not be deluded either by any grandiose dream of winning the war by one colossal blow, or of preserving the individuality of an American army at the expense of the lives of the American soldiers. It is a mistake and it will remain a mistake to attempt to use our troops in great numbers until the smaller units have had training at the front in association with and under the command of British or French officers.

Had the Ottawa announcement proven correct there would have been and there should have been a mighty protest in this country against a policy which could lead only to the sacrifice now of the last reserves of our Allies in trained troops and to the later immolation of vast masses of our own troops who would be sent into a major action destitute of battle training.

President Wilson never did a wiser or better thing than when he ordered our troops to be brigaded with French and British troops. This was not merely a contribution to Allied safety at a critical moment; it was the adoption of a policy with respect to our troops which should be maintained until we have a large body of trained officers and men of our own. After that, we can expand our forces as it may be necessary.

There is another aspect of the discussion of the American plans which is highly disquieting. It is a mistake, and should be recognized as such, to believe that the German offensive is over or that we have passed the point where we need fear further German successes. This is not the truth. On the contrary, every military man knows that there is going to be another German blow, that it will be a heavy blow and that even though it again miss supreme success, as every one believes, it is at least possible that it will inflict staggering losses and achieve dangerous local success. The difference between confidence born of determination and optimism growing out of miscalculation should be clear to every one now. We have survived the first shock of the German blow of 1918. We have to face other shocks which will be hardly less terrific.

We are in for a life and death struggle for the next three months. And it is a mistake now to seize upon an alleged change of plans with respect to the American troops to talk glibly of German failure and Allied success. This merely means clearing the way for another period of pessimism when the German attacks again. It tends to slacken the pace of preparation, lessen the effort and help the German thereby. We ought to beat the German. We shall beat him if everybody works up to his limit. We shall be close to victory in that hour when we have at last ceased to underestimate our task or our enemy.

James Gordon Bennett

To New Yorkers of to-day James Gordon Bennett had become only a hazy memory. He had passed out of recollection with the New York of the seventies and eighties (delightful in the self-centredness and color of its provincial life), in which he was in his earlier years a picturesque and familiar figure.

Times change with brutal rapidity. For more than two decades Mr. Bennett has been as much a stranger in New York as New York itself has become a stranger to those earlier local conditions on which the fame and prosperity of "The New York Herald" rested and with which Mr. Bennett's first activities as its editor were so strikingly in accord.

The old New York was narrow, self-contented, genially parochial in spirit. "The Herald," under the elder Bennett, who was a rugged egoist, was intensely local and personal in its newspaper policies. It got the news of the world—showing marked enterprise in that respect. But its point of view was always that of purely routine journalism.

Under the younger Bennett these tendencies continued. He developed the machinery of news-gathering in the foreign field, helped Mackay to build new cable lines and kept "The Herald" at the front as a collector of information from all parts of the world. He also was a pioneer in news-making undertakings on a grand scale, like the Stanley expedition to Central Africa to rescue Livingstone and the Jeannette expedition to the Arctic.

Yet the editorial point of view remained the same. It was journalistic only in the reportorial sense. It comprehended no thought of broad public service in politics or of leadership in social readjustments. Yet never before in the history of journalism has such pressure been brought on the newspaper press to drop the mere rôle of observation and to plunge into the thick of current movements for social and political betterment as has been brought to bear on it in the last two decades.

Mr. Bennett was indifferent to that pressure. The spectator's attitude pleased him better. His almost continuous absence from the country handicapped him to an extent which he probably did not appreciate. The immense and rapid change in the temper and outlook of the New York public also escaped him. It lost touch with "The Herald" more and more because "The Herald" made no sufficient effort to keep in touch with it.

Modern journalism is an extremely fluid profession. Success in it requires alertness and concentration. A leader in one generation may easily find himself isolated and sidetracked in the next. That has been the experience of Bennett. He allowed the machine which he had brought to so high a state of efficiency in the eighties to disintegrate. It gradually passed into the category of disused models.

Mr. Bennett's former rank as an American journalist has been lowered by "The Herald's" long decline. Yet he is entitled to respect for the energy and vision which he exhibited in the news field in the earlier part of his career. He was beyond question a broader and more intelligent man than his father. It was unfortunate for him that a defect in his professional make-up—the lack of a true appreciation of the journalist's duty to the public and the future—should have operated to cloud his marked initial successes. As we have said, changed conditions greatly emphasized that defect. Yet it was an inherent and possibly an ineradicable weakness, which must bar him from the company of great American editors—of those, certainly, by whom power to mould the opinion of their countrymen has been accepted in a spirit of dedication to public service and exercised as a moral and intellectual trust.

The Simple Life

A sincere and inspiring soul was Pastor Wagner, who put capitals on the Simple Life and dined at the White House on the strength of them. He brought across the Atlantic a real message and a valuable one. We should all be better and wiser folk had we harkened to it. Yet he did not penetrate very far in America, save as he impinged upon current slang to denominate a temporary period of convalescence after too much Broadway.

That is the way of most preaching, unfortunately. We always doubted how many large families Colonel Roosevelt's eloquence brought into this mad world. The stream of life is a fairly deep proposition. Families, large and small, come and go by virtue of very fundamental tendencies. So does the complex or the simple life, for each of us. The fine words of preachers—and editorials—are more like bubbles on the surface than anything else; they may show which way the current is setting, but they seldom control the waters below.

It took the war to succeed where Pastor Wagner failed. Military life is about the simplest life civilized people maintain. All our men who enter it will chew about as hard a morsel of simple, primeval existence as can be contrived. The pity is that the rest of us are not sharing that lot. Some are, of necessity. More will share it each year if the war continues. The complex livers still persist around us, however, as theatres and shops and restaurants bear witness. More power to the war, the one invincible preacher and persuader!

Here Is Loyalty

Every American of heart and vision will be profoundly touched by the farewell which the "Freie Presse," of Brooklyn, addressed to its readers in discontinuing publication. This sincere voice of true Americanism is a grateful relief after the mass of German treachery and enmity which the Kaiser's propagandists have preached in the tongue of the Fatherland. The "Freie Presse" has for fifty years sought to guide its readers in the true course:

> "But the last stretch of the road must be travelled alone by our readers. . . . We hope that during the trying months of the first year of the war they recognized what the time does demand of them—uncompromising and absolute loyalty to the land to which they now and in future belong; uncompromising obedience to the laws and uncompromising submission to the measures made necessary by the war."

Here is pathos and here is loyalty. Here are those stanch Americans of German stock whom we had learned to know and trust. We believe there are many of them. "By their acts ye shall know them." They have gone through a trying test and wearying years of disillusionment and grief. We can sympathize with their trials and be proud to call them Americans.

Where Are the Brown Charges?

Fourteen days ago Lucius P. Brown, Director of the Bureau of Foods and Drugs of the Health Department, was suspended on charges to be preferred later. How much later? We understand that an assiduous search has been made in Dr. Brown's office, and outside it, for evidence of irregularities, incompetency and inefficiency. When the professional standing and personal integrity of Dr. Brown were openly attacked and he replied respectfully he was summarily suspended. The attack was vague, indefinite and public.

It seemed so obvious that the charges should be specific and that the opportunity for defence should be public that we welcomed as an evidence of good faith Commissioner Copeland's suggestion of an open trial. But now, when public interest is presumed to have lagged a bit, Dr. Copeland retraces his steps and refers the matter to the Corporation Counsel, who may reply that it is customary, as it is, to conduct this sort of examination privately. Then Lucius P. Brown can be lynched behind closed doors without annoying the public with the unpleasant details.

One point is overlooked. If it is not customary to carry on a Civil Service trial in the open, neither is it customary to suspend an official without bringing definite charges against him. Dr. Brown has a right to a hearing just as public as the accusation and suspension from office.

Mayor Hylan tried the good old-fashioned plan of asking that the heads of the departments be served up to him on a political salver. Commissioner Amster deserves honorable mention for his refusal to serve his party by any such antique attack on the Civil Service. Commissioner Copeland is in danger of lending his hard-won scientific reputation and personal standing, whether wittingly or not, to further Mayor Hylan's purposes.

The Abolition of German Teaching

Next Friday the Board of Superintendents will vote upon the question of discontinuing German classes in New York's public schools during the war. We can see no good reason why this should not be done, and done quickly.

First of all, the reaction of a healthy American boy or girl to the German language now would naturally be one of dislike or derision. Therefore the money spent on this at this time would be very largely money thrown away.

Secondly, it seems rather ridiculous to talk about the atrocities perpetrated by German troops and extol the beauties of German literature to our children. That literature is no more wonderful, for example, than French literature, and for the rest a real sense for the beauties of a masterpiece in a foreign tongue can be acquired only after a much longer course than that usually given in our public schools.

As to the practical value of German, it ought to have now, for us, practically none. Either Germany has transgressed all the laws of civilization or this gigantic struggle is merely one of sordid rivalry. There is no middle ground.

The breach made in the pay-as-you-go policy by Governor Whitman's signing of the Wagner bill is not a great one, but it is one which should not have been made nevertheless. This measure permits New York City to issue each year during the war, and for one year after, $15,000,000 of corporate stock and serial bonds to finance non-revenue producing improvements. It is the understanding that the money will be used for school and hospital extension work. Those are desirable expenditures, but still expenditures which should be made possible out of budget appropriations.

Speaker Clark opens a speech by denouncing partisanship and then addresses himself fervently to the sin of being a Republican. "One Stump Speech Too Many," says "The New York World," wishing that Clark hadn't done it, and that nobody will do it again. Perfect contradiction! The larger the beam in one's own eye the more clearly one sees the mote in another's. Only a true partisan can adequately denounce partisanship.

The Tied Tongue

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Will you allow me to say a word in your columns in protest against the meeting to be held under the auspices of the American Defence Society and the American Relief Legion at the Waldorf-Astoria next Wednesday evening? I understand that the object of this meeting is to arouse a popular feeling against the German-language newspapers in this and other cities. May I say a word in favor of these much-belabored sheets?

I think I am in a position to do this without laying myself open to the charge of pro-Germanism. I was the first, I believe, a year ago, to carry on through the syndicate service of the Vigilantes a systematic campaign against certain disloyal newspapers printed in the German language. I subscribed to a dozen or more of the more prominent of them, read them assiduously and hammered them with zest in an article in "The Outlook" called "The Menace of the German-American Press," and in countless editorials sent out by the Vigilantes, for the blatant opposition of these newspapers not only to the Allies but to America herself. Those newspapers at that time were all that the American Defence Society says mistakenly that they are now. They were just as pro-German as they dared to be.

Toward the end of the summer their editors began to see light. Through the efforts of The New York Tribune, "The Minneapolis Journal" and other newspapers the attention of the country and of Congress had been drawn to their flagrantly un-American utterances. Congress acted, but it did not suppress the German-language papers. It did something far better. It practically collared them all, putting them under the thumb of the Postoffice Department. Every German-language newspaper thereafter could work only under a government license, revokable at any minute. From that hour the Postmaster General became practically editor in chief of all the German-language newspapers of the country. The editors of these newspapers had to file a translation, to whose correctness they had to swear, of every editorial published by them which dealt with the war. Since then the editors of the German-language newspapers have not been allowed to utter a peep in criticism even of the Administration, to say nothing of the government or of our allies. To the editors this has undoubtedly been a hardship, for no man enjoys wearing a muzzle. But it has been my personal experience in what dealings I have had with the editors of the German-language newspapers that they chafed at this restriction not because it prevented them from giving expression to pro-German sentiments, but because it prevented them from voicing legitimate criticism on the conduct of the war. In other words, like a great many other German-Americans who were pro-German before the war, the editors of these papers have gradually moved from dutiful to wholehearted support of America in her war against Germany. The action of the German government in Russia and the Lichnowsky revelations—which a number of them printed in extenso—have, of course, helped along their conversion. I believe that the majority of them are now absolutely and unqualifiedly loyal. I believe that they should be allowed to continue, not only because it would be unjust to suppress them now that they have shown themselves with and for America, but because the American government and the American people need the very valuable help that they can give.

For these papers are doing all they can to help America win the war. They have not only printed vigorous editorials backing the Liberty loans and given them liberal advertising space, but they have themselves collected subscriptions among the Americans of German origin, with astonishing success. One small German-language newspaper in Pittsburgh alone took in subscriptions amounting to $350,000. These papers are, furthermore, supporting every campaign to help America win the war, urging thrift, urging food conservation, urging contributions to the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A. They reach the people, furthermore, whom no newspaper printed in the English language would reach. To our shame be it said that there are hundreds of thousands of American citizens of German origin who cannot read papers printed in English. If you take from these men and women their German-language newspapers, you isolate them absolutely from the rest of the American people. There is no way then to bring them into the war activities. They will drift into a group apart, sullenly returning to that pro-Germanism from which they are now, thanks largely to the efforts of the German-language newspapers, emerging. I do not protest in the least against a campaign against German-language newspapers which are disloyal. If any such publications still exist they should be suppressed and their editors should be put in jail. To suppress the ones which are loyal is merely to deprive ourselves of valuable allies.

The whole question of the foreign-language press is a large one with many ramifications. Mr. Roosevelt cannot on the whole be accused of being pro-German. He believes that all foreign-language newspapers should ultimately be converted into English-language newspapers. He has never publicly advocated, however, as far as I know, that loyal German-language newspapers should immediately be suppressed, either by the government or through popular action. In a recent article in "The Kansas City Star" entitled "Fair Play for Good Americans," he writes:

> "We should provide by law so that after *a reasonable interval* every newspaper in this country should be published in English." The italics are mine.

The American Defence Society is doing splendid work in urging a speeding up of our activities in the war. To nine-tenths of its programme every American citizen, including every American citizen of German origin, can heartily assent. But in the matter of the German-language press the American Defence Society is fanatic.

We want a united country. I believe we are going to have a united country. I see signs daily of the increasing willingness of the German-American to accept wholeheartedly his government's opposition to Germany and his government's desire to crush forever the militaristic system which is responsible for this world war. In other words, the majority of those German-Americans who were pro-German are now straight Americans and pro-America. If the German-American question is handled with sympathy and intelligence, in six months there will be no more German-Americans left. They will be all straight Americans. But we must not hammer them indiscriminately and we must not suppress the only vehicle by which a large number of them can be reached. We must not let the fanatics have the upper hand over the forces of reason and justice.

HERMANN HAGEDORN,
Sunnytop Farm, Fairfield, Conn., May 13, 1918.

SAMMY: "WHAT'S THE MATTER? AM I LITTLE EARLY?"

Wheels for Pershing

A Romance of Ordnance

By Theodore M. Knappen

ALLIANCE, Ohio, May 11.—It was a question of wheels for great guns.

The ordnance bureau wanted improvised carriages for guns that had been built for fixed carriages. In our coast defence service we had some big stationary guns that could be spared. Pershing was calling for big guns. The only way to satisfy him was to put the big coast guns on wheels.

England had to do a lot of improvising like that in her first year of the war. Plans of the English improvisations were obtained. They were very elaborate—306 parts to each wheel. Moreover, they had failed to stand up in the rough usage of war. Also, they were tedious to build. Simpler and stronger carriages were demanded.

Putting It Up to Alliance

Washington put this problem up to Alliance. Alliance is a little town, but it boasts a great engineering plant—that of the Morgan Engineering Company. The specialty of this company is big jobs. It doesn't manufacture. It builds. It deals with things of iron and steel in monster dimensions. Massive machine tools, rolling mills, presses, brakes, forges, power hammers, cranes—these are the things on which it lives. It abhors the rattle of small gear, but it rejoices in the thud of the mighty hammers on great forgings. It is happy in 100-ton cranes mounted high above long aisles; it smiles when one of these monsters picks up a weight of scores of tons and conveys it quickly and smoothly from place to place. It laughs when a boring machine goes through steel castings as a knife through cheese. It lives and has its being in the daily conquest of mass by wee men.

So Colonel W. H. Morgan, president of the company, grinned when Washington went to Alliance.

"We'll cast the wheels in a solid piece of steel," said the colonel."

"It never has been done," said one.

"It can't be done," said another.

"We'll do it," said the colonel.

The Poured Wheel

Those who know something of steel castings will understand why it seemed impossible to cast a many spoked steel wheel six feet and four inches in diameter and with a tread of twenty inches.

The making of this single piece would do away with a built-up wheel of hundreds of parts. It was worth trying. So Colonel Morgan took up the plan with his foundry at Canton. Here he encountered a stubborn conservatism on the part of some of the foundrymen. They were so sure that the thing couldn't be done that it made Colonel Morgan equally sure that they could do it.

The incentive of difficulty triumphed. To-day wheels from Morgan's company convey 5 and 6 inch American-made guns to the front in France.

All over the works are posted up copies of a letter from the chief of ordnance expressing his appreciation for the way the Morgan works put the rollers under the big guns—and did a few other things at the same time.

Cradles

The cradles for the guns had to be made, cradles not only for action, but cradles for the transport carriages; and then there was the recoil mechanism. A big gun cradle is no baby's affair. Then there were the powerful, built-up steel trails—the cannon's tail. A 6-inch rifle, thirty feet long, with its trail, cradle and recoil, by the time it is mounted on its carriage weighs too much for successful traction over any but the most solid roads. When it is moved any distance the gun must be shifted to a transport carriage with the big 76-inch wheels. Both the transport and the carriage have two secondary wheels, each of smaller size.

Altogether it was necessary to make some 860 cast steel wheels, each a solid piece, as against a like number of built-up wheels of more than 260,000 parts. The order was received last August and the first shipment of completed carriages was started for France last Thanksgiving Day.

The Morgan contract calls for the equipment of 5 and 6 inch gun barrels for wagon road transport, and railway car barbette mountings for 8-inch rifles and 12-inch mortars. The amount of machining and other work involved in preparing and adjusting all the castings required and the structural work on the trails is prodigious. This is a job that is one of separate rather than quantity production. It is as unlike the Ford method of production as can be imagined. Power and machinery are used on a gigantic scale, of course, but these big instruments of war are made by men using powerful tools, rather than by men superintending automatic machines.

New Halls

The expansion of the Morgan plant under the stimulus of war orders is interesting and typical of what is happening throughout the manufacturing districts of the country. Five lofty halls of steel and glass, varying from 880 to 380 feet in length, are being rushed to completion to handle the present and anticipated government contracts, and the number of workmen is more than doubled.

One wonders what is to be done with all this added capacity for production when the war is over. Colonel Morgan has plans for peace uses for the whole plant, however, and the same is true of most of the plants that are extending to meet the present emergency.

It was found that the neck of the bottle of the plant's production was in the horizontal boring machines. Those machines and the men on them determined how fast big guns could go to Pershing. It was necessary that they should never stop. The situation was explained to the men in charge of them. They rose to the occasion immediately, and now the big boring machines never stop. The men cheerfully gave up their lunch hours and stayed on the job, with an occasional sandwich in one hand and the crosshead in the other.

Following the Flag

They haven't—those men—put little flags—American flags—on every machine in the big shop just for decorative purposes. They're following the flag, and they like to have it before them as a daily reminder that they, too, serve who stay and work—like hell.

Lords Cheaper Than Commons

(From The London Daily News)

It costs £279,898 a year "to run" the House of Commons, including £208,000 for members' salaries, and £44,567 to work the House of Lords. For the coming year the Lords are putting on an extra item of £1,800 for six reporters, as they are now issuing their debates daily, like the House of Commons. In view of the fact that the Commons, who hold many and long sittings, can manage with twelve reporters, the Lords, who sit neither early nor very often, are doing themselves well.

Too Much To Believe

From The New York Times

It is probable that most people who read attentively the report of George Creel's address on Sunday night before the open forum of the Church of the Ascension read it with constantly growing surprise, and that the feeling left with them at the end was one of positive disquiet. Mr. Creel, at the close of his address, answered questions from the audience concerning the policies of the Administration, and answered them as if he were the authorized spokesman of the Administration. Some of the questions were searching ones, like "Why does America object to Japan entering Russia?" and "Why does not the government suppress the Hearst newspapers?" Offhand and glibly, Mr. Creel answered, and without the least reticence; nor was there anything in his words to indicate that he was standing before that audience as the other self of the President. For instance, the question about why "the government"—the government, mind—does not suppress the Hearst newspapers was answered by Mr. Creel as if he were "the government":

> "In the first place I do not believe in the suppression of anything." . . .

So, when asked concerning Mr. Roosevelt's activities, he replied in the same manner:

> "I tell you quite frankly that I would regret deeply if anything were done to rob us of Mr. Roosevelt's criticism." . . .

"Us!" Asked concerning the suppression of the Lusitania memorial meeting in New York City in 1916, he used the same tone exactly:

> "That was the work of your New York police, and I do not assume responsibility for them." . . .

When he was asked why America objected to Japan's entering Siberia he made no reservations; he answered straightforwardly on behalf of the government: "Because we feel," etc. He even gave a little advance news about the government's taxation intentions: "The rich man is going to be taxed higher and higher, until he will have but little left."

Now, while Mr. Creel was thus openly assuming the post of official spokesman of the Administration, he did not assume to be spokesman for the whole government. He spoke with perfect assurance and confidence for the executive branch, but as soon as any other branch of the government was mentioned he ceased to assume responsibility and ceased to appear as possessing perfect knowledge. This makes it impossible to conjecture that Mr. Creel's confident way of speaking is merely a mannerism. He speaks confidently for the Administration because he does count himself, or wishes others to count him, as the voice of the Administration; but when another branch of the government is asked about he does not pretend to any special knowledge. For example, asked a question about Congress, he replied:

> "I don't like slumming, so I won't explore the heart of Congress for you."

It cannot be possible that Mr. Creel is really the President's spokesman, or that, if he is, he is authorized to go about the country baring the President's mind extemporaneously on public platforms in reply to casual questions. It must be that Mr. Creel has mistaken his position, his mission, his powers. It must be that he has too high an opinion of himself, that he has taken too seriously some kindly intended compliments which the President may have given him in conversation. It simply cannot be that the President has authorized the chairman of the Committee on Public Information to discharge the President's mind at the top of his voice whenever some unknown person rises in a public meeting and asks him a question about important national policies.

Benefits of Carnivorous Diet

(From The Boston Transcript)

"Ever bothered with tramps out your way?"

"No; I have a sign on the gate reading: 'We are vegetarians, but our dog isn't.'"